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ABSTRACT

In fall 1981, all students attending a continuing education course at Harford Community College (HCC) were asked to complete a survey instrument designed to collect information on student demographics, reasons for attendance, tuition payment, sources of information about the non-credit courses, registration and commuting patterns, satisfaction with the college and its programs, and suggestions for additional course offerings. Study findings, based on responses from 1,395 students, included the following: (1) 62% of the students were female, 90% were white and 7% black, 54% were married, 46% were employed full-time, and their average age was 37 years; (2) 35% of the respondents were taking continuing education classes for personal interest or self-enrichment; (3) 54% indicated that the course they were taking was directly or somewhat related to their career; (4) 21% of the respondents were enrolled in business courses, 20% in industrial arts courses, 16% in home economics courses, and 11% in health care courses; (5) 48% of the respondents were satisfied with the course location, 49% with instructional costs, 61% with course quality, and 49% with the course overall; and (6) respondents recommended additional courses in health care, data processing, mechanical areas, and engineering. The survey includes an analysis of the responses of different population sub-groups, as well as the survey instrument and tables comparing results for sub-groups. (HB)

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CONTINUING EDUCATION SURVEY, FALL 1981

Continuing Education Division

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CONTINUING EDUCATION SURVEY, FALL 1981

INTRODUCTION

Background

Over the last decade, non-credit continuing education has increasingly become a vital component of higher education. Indeed, many colleges are relying on growing enrollments in the non-credit area to offset enrollment drops on the credit side. This trend has been particularly pronounced within the community college movement.

It is not surprising, therefore, that the State Board for Community Colleges in conjunction with individual community colleges conducted a study of continuing education in the Fall of 1978 and again in the Fall of 1981.

This report (structured similarly to the SBCC 1978 study) will highlight the results of the Fall 1981 Continuing Education Survey conducted at Harford Community College. The report will attempt to answer several basic questions concerning the students enrolled in continuing education courses both for the total population and relevant subgroups. These questions are: Who attends, Why do they attend, How did they attend, How satisfied were they, and What would they like to see offered in the future. Brief narratives will be provided for these questions with accompanying tables and charts designed to allow for further probing by the administrative staff of the College. Respondents 60 years or older, females aged 30-50 (the returning-women students), and students taking courses related to their careers will be highlighted separately from the total (see Appendix B for comparative tables).

It is hoped that this report will aid in the understanding of and future planning for the continuing education program at Harford Community College. Further data analysis for subpopulations not highlighted is possible upon request to the Office of Institutional Research.

Research Design

In the Fall of 1981 all Harford Community College students attending a continuing education class were asked to complete a survey instrument provided by the SBCC (see Appendix A). Some 1,395 HCC students complied with this request. However, through an administrative oversight, students enrolled in physical education classes were excluded from the study. The results detailed below will, therefore, be interpreted taking into consideration this omission. The subject matter of the courses taken by the respondents of the continuing education survey were as follows:

SUBJECT MATTER OF COURSES TAKEN
CONTINUING EDUCATION SURVEY, FALL 1981

Subject	Number	Percent
Business	230	21%
Industrial Arts	227	20%
Home Economics	182	16%
Health Care	121	11%
Education	93	8%
Engineering	65	6%
Arts	61	5%
Language	43	4%
Computer Science	26	2%
Phys Ed-Leisure	26	2%
Law	15	1%
Psychology	10	1%
Math	9	1%
Communication	8	1%
Social Science	8	1%

RESULTS

Who Attends?

How are the students distributed by age, sex, race, marital status, and income?

Continuing education students range in age from under 15 to 99 plus years old. The median range (50 percent falling above or below) is 30-34 and the mode (the most frequently occurring) is 20-24. The average age of continuing education students is 37.

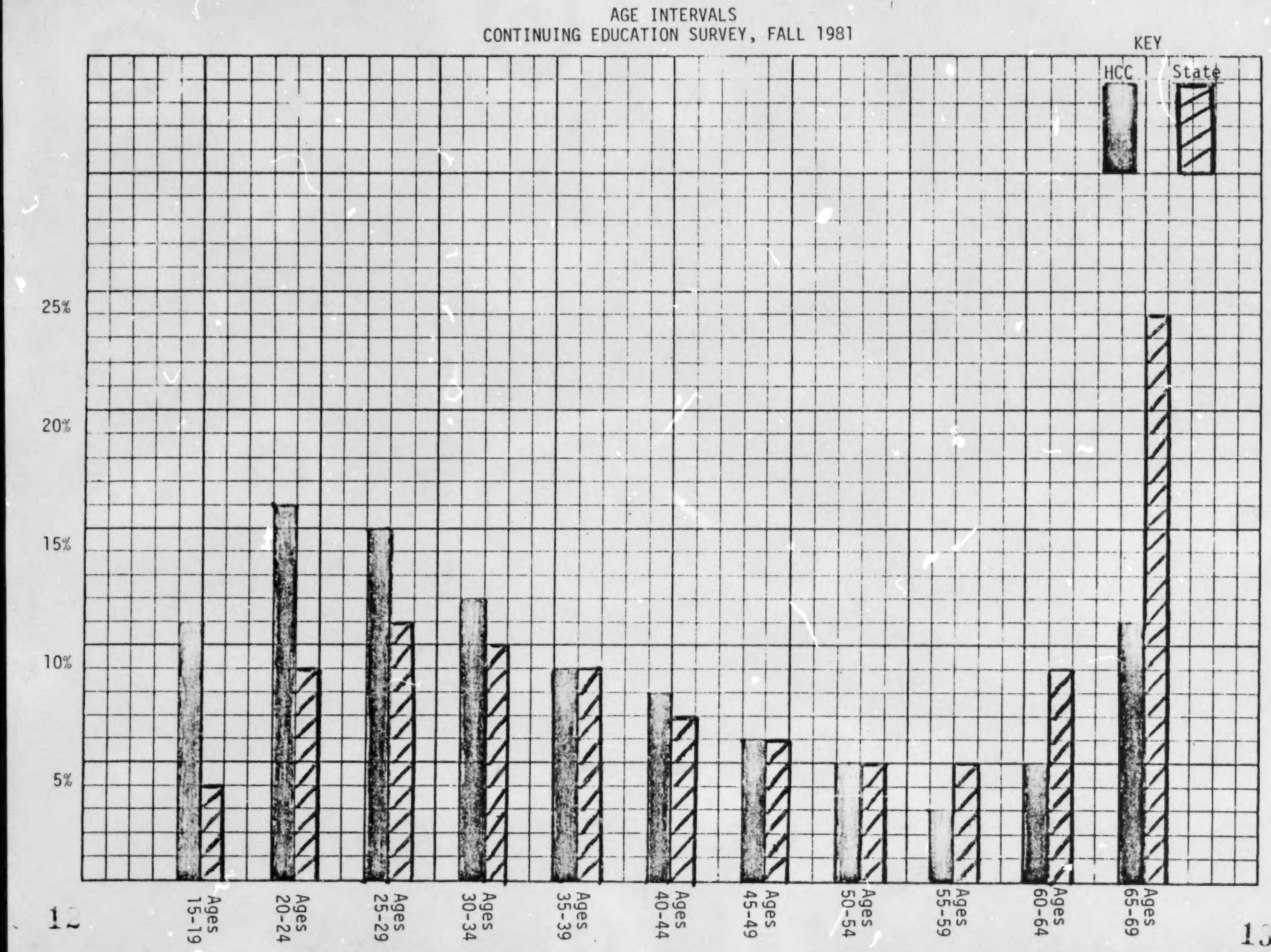
Compared to the State as a whole, Harford Community College population tends to have twice as many students in the younger range, the same number in the middle range, and one-half as many in the senior citizen range. HCC has 27 percent under 24 while the State has 13 percent, and conversely HCC has 16 percent over 60 while the State has 33 percent. Harford's programs exclusively designed for or heavily attended by youth (YETP, ABE/GED, Detention Center) greatly increases the magnitude of the younger range. In many counties, agencies other than a community college assume responsibility for some or all of these areas.

Compared to HCC's credit enrollment, the non-credit student body tends to be older with 38 percent over 40 as compared to 12 percent on the credit side and 27 percent under 24 as compared to 52 percent for credit. The average age for credit students (28) is almost 10 years younger than non-credit (37).

AGE INTERVALS
CONTINUING EDUCATION SURVEY, FALL 1981

Ages	Number of Respondents	Percentage Cont. Ed.	Cumulative Percentage	Comparative Percentage HCC Credit	Comparative Percentage Cont. Ed. State
15-19	142	11%	11%	26%	4%
20-24	208	16%	27%	26%	9%
25-29	199	15%	42%	14%	11%
30-34	159	12%	54%	14%	10%
35-39	118	9%	63%	8%	9%
40-44	105	8%	71%	12%	7%
45-49	74	6%	77%		6%
50-54	66	5%	82%		5%
55-59	43	3%	85%		5%
60-64	66	5%	90%		9%
65-99	144	11%	101%		24%

N = 1324


AGE INTERVALS
CONTINUING EDUCATION SURVEY, FALL 1981
KEY
HCC
State
25%
20%
15%
10%
5%
Ages 15-19
Ages 20-24
Ages 25-29
Ages 30-34
Ages 35-39
Ages 40-44
Ages 45-49
Ages 50-54
Ages 55-59
Ages 60-64
Ages 65-69

Non-credit students are comprised of roughly 60 percent female and 40 percent male--about the same as credit and the State as a whole.

SEX
CONTINUING EDUCATION SURVEY, FALL 1981

Sex	Number	Percent
Female	861	62%
Male	534	38%

N = 1395

By race, continuing education students are also approximately the same as credit students with 90 percent white and 10 percent black and other.

RACE
CONTINUING EDUCATION SURVEY, FALL 1981

Sex	Number	Percent
Black	90	7%
White	1238	90%
Other	44	3%

N = 1372

Over half of the continuing education students are married (about twice as many as credit) and one-fourth are single (almost one-third as many as credit). Another 8 percent are separated or divorced; 10 percent are widowed.

MARITAL STATUS
CONTINUING EDUCATION SURVEY, FALL 1981

Marital Status	Number	Percent
Married	763	54%
Single	370	26%
Separated or Divorced	117	8%
Widowed	139	10%
Other	15	1%

N = 1404

The median and mode income range for Harford Community College non-credit students falls between $10,000-$19,999 a year. Forty-three percent make under $10,000 and 24 percent over $20,000.

INCOME
CONTINUING EDUCATION SURVEY, FALL 1981

Income	Number	Percent	Cumulative Percent
$0-4,999	278	24%	24%
$5,000-9,999	229	19%	43%
$10,000-19,999	389	33%	76%
$20,000-29,999	177	15%	91%
$30,000-39,999	73	6%	97%
Over $40,000	32	3%	100%

N = 1178

What is the current employment status of non-credit students?

Nearly 80 percent of the respondents are engaged in employment with about 50 percent full-time, 10 percent part-time, and 20 percent homemaker. Nearly 80 percent of Harford Community College credit students are also engaged in employment but in a very different configuration with 40 percent employed full-time, 30 percent part-time, and 10 percent homemaker.

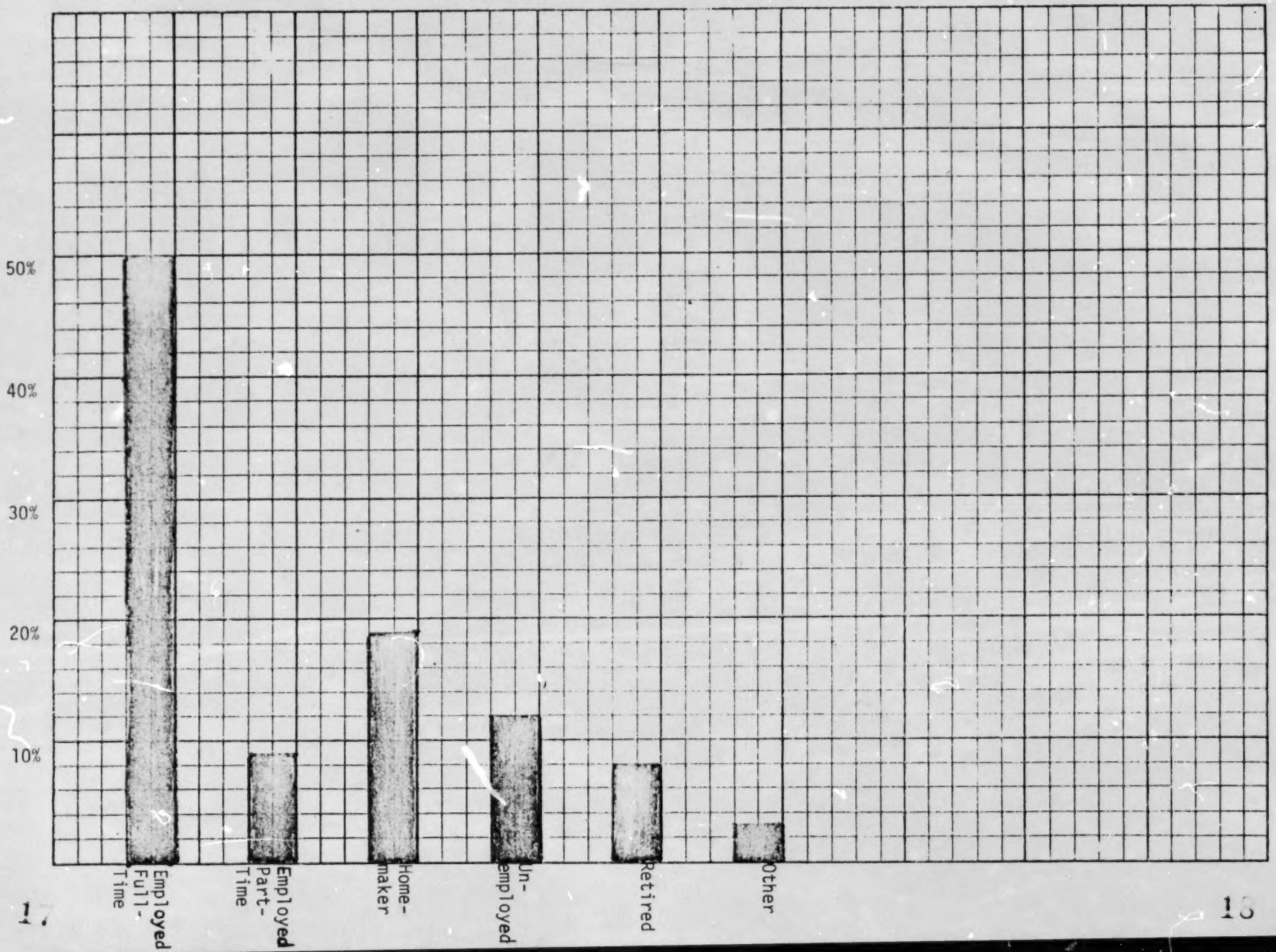
Harford Community College also differs from the State figures on several categories especially for the number of retired students with 8 percent from Harford and 24 percent from the State. (Recall that the percentage of 60 and over students at HCC was about one-half of the State's.)

CURRENT EMPLOYMENT SCALE COLLAPSED
CONTINUING EDUCATION SURVEY, FALL 1981

Employment Status	Number	HCC Percent	State Percent
Employed Full-Time	682	50%	46%
Employed Part-Time	116	9%	8%
Homemaker	252	19%	14%
Unemployed	157	12%	6%
Retired	112	8%	24%
Other	45	3%	2%

N = 1364

CURRENT EMPLOYMENT SCALE COLLAPSED
CONTINUING EDUCATION SURVEY, FALL 1981



What is the highest previous education reported by students?

Approximately two-thirds of the continuing education students have a high school diploma or better and one-third have less than high school. Harford Community College's rate of 28 percent below high school is almost twice as many as the State rate of 16 percent. Again, this is largely explained by Harford's programs exclusively designed for or heavily attended by youth.

HIGHEST EDUCATION LEVEL
CONTINUING EDUCATION SURVEY, FALL 1981

Education Level	Number	HCC Percent	Cumulative Percent	State Percent
Less than high school	373	28%	28%	16%
High school diploma	604	45%	73%	43%
Certificate	43	3%	76%	3%
AA - AS	83	6%	82%	6%
BA - BS	142	11%	93%	17%
MA - MS	54	4%	97%	8%
PhD	4	0%	97%	2%
Other	53	4%	101%	6%

N = 1356

Students were also asked what other educational activities they are currently pursuing. Approximately 20 percent were taking one other non-credit class with another 13 percent taking more than one. On the other hand, only 7 percent are taking any credit courses. The vast majority, 67 percent for non-credit and 93 for credit, were not taking any other classes.

NUMBER TAKING OTHER NON-CREDIT COURSES
CONTINUING EDUCATION SURVEY, FALL 1981

Number of Non-Credit Courses	Number	Percent	Cumulative Percent
0	970	67%	67%
1	299	21%	88%
2	110	8%	96%
3	42	3%	99%
4 or over	35	2%	101%

N = 1456

NUMBER TAKING CREDIT COURSES
CONTINUING EDUCATION SURVEY, FALL 1981

Number of Credit Courses	Number	Percent	Cumulative Percent
0	1351	93%	93%
1	54	4%	97%
2	31	2%	99%
3 or greater	20	1%	100%

N = 1456

Why Do They Attend?

Why did students register for continuing education offerings? What is the relationship between the course taken and the student's job?

Forty-seven percent of the respondents were taking courses to develop a leisure time activity or for personal interest and self-enrichment, while 41 percent were taking courses for reasons relating to career goals and 8 percent were taking courses because of academic concerns. Harford Community College's continuing education students take courses more for career reasons than personal reasons as compared to State percentages. This is partially explained by the greater number of younger and smaller number of older students and because those students taking physical education were excluded from the study.

RESPONDENT REASONS FOR TAKING THE COURSE
CONTINUING EDUCATION SURVEY, FALL 1981

Reasons	Number	HCC Percent	State Percent
Prepare for a new career	258	20%	
Improve skills for current job	224	17%	
Licensure or certification	47	4%	
Total Career	566	41%	31%
Preparation for entry into a degree/certificate program at a college	58	4%	
Exploration of new subject area	48	4%	
Total Academic	106	8%	7%
Develop a leisure time activity	152	12%	
Personal interest and self-enirchment	456	35%	
Total Personal	608	47%	58%
Other	68	5%	4%

N = 1311

Fifty-four percent of the continuing education students reported that the course they were taking was directly (30 percent) or somewhat (24 percent) related to their career. Forty-six percent reported no course/job relationship. Again, Harford Community College respondents tend to be more career oriented than the State as a whole with 8 percent more falling in the career category.

RELATIONSHIP OF COURSE TO CAREER
CONTINUING EDUCATION SURVEY, FALL 1981

Relationship	Number	HCC Percent	State Percent
Directly	397	30%	27%
Somewhat	326	24%	19%
Not at all	617	46%	54%

N = 1456

Of those taking courses directly or somewhat related to a career, 42 percent saw benefits in obtaining a job, 30 percent in obtaining salary increases or promotions, and 71 percent increasing the skills/knowledge required for their job.

BENEFITS OF COURSE
(FOR COURSES DIRECTLY OR SOMEWHAT RELATED TO CAREER)
CONTINUING EDUCATION SURVEY, FALL 1981

Benefit	Number	Percent
Obtaining a job	250	42%
Obtaining salary increases or promotions	182	3%
Increase the skills/knowledge required for job	420	71%
Other	104	18%

N = 589

How Did They Attend?

What was the source of funds for tuition payment?

Sixty percent of those responding paid their own tuition or received funds from their families. Another 33 percent received governmental or employer support and 8 percent got funds from other sources. Not surprisingly, given Harford's proximity to a major federal installation, 24 percent received support from the government as compared to 18 percent statewide.

SOURCE OF TUITION PAYMENT
CONTINUING EDUCATION SURVEY, FALL 1981

Source	Number	Percent
Self	720	52%
Governmental support	335	24%
Employer pre-payment	92	7%
Other	85	6%
Spouse	75	5%
Parent	40	3%
Employer reimbursement	29	2%
Waiver	22	2%

N = 1398

GENERAL SOURCES OF TUITION PAYMENT
CONTINUING EDUCATION SURVEY, FALL 1981

Source	Number	Percent
Family or Self	835	60%
Governmental or Employer Support	456	33%
Other	107	8%

N = 1398

How did students find out about non-credit courses?

The most potent source of information on non-credit offerings at Harford Community College is college publications (52 percent) followed by suggestions from a neighbor (21 percent). Harford Community College respondents relied more heavily on college publications (52 percent versus 40 percent) than the State and relied less on the newspaper (3 percent versus 20 percent) than the State as a whole.

METHOD THAT STUDENT BECAME AWARE OF COURSE
CONTINUING EDUCATION SURVEY, FALL 1981

Method	Number	HCC Percentage	State Percentage
College publications	714	52%	40%
Neighbor, friend, relative	295	21%	20%
Self-inquiry	132	10%	9%
Employer	130	9%	9%
Other	66	5%	14%
Newspaper	39	3%	20%
TV-Radio	1	0%	0%

N = 1377

How did students register for and how did they commute to class?

The vast majority (84 percent) of Harford Community College students registered in person with 10 percent registering by mail and 6 percent other. Compared with the State, HCC relies much heavier (84 percent versus 58 percent) on in-person registration and relies much less on mail-in (10 percent versus 35 percent) than the State. However, Harford students now receive mail-in forms in the College publications which, in all likelihood, will greatly increase the number of mail-ins.

Not surprisingly, for a community college in a rural setting, 85 percent commute by car with 7 percent walking and 8 percent other.

METHOD OF REGISTRATION
CONTINUING EDUCATION SURVEY, FALL 1981

Method	Number	HCC Percentage	State Percentage
Mail-in	144	10%	35%
In-person	1187	84%	58%
Other	78	6%	7%

N = 1409

METHOD OF COMMUTING
CONTINUING EDUCATION SURVEY, FALL 1981

Method	Number	Percent
Car	1200	85%
Walk	95	7%
Other	118	8%

N = 1313

How Satisfied Were They?

Students were asked to state their level of satisfaction with the course overall, the location, the cost, the difficulty of content, the content as advertised, the quality of instruction, the time the course is offered, and the registration process. Ninety-five percent or more of the students were either highly satisfied or satisfied on every listed item. Location and registration received the lowest ratings with 5 percent highly unsatisfied with each. Quality of instruction received the highest rating with 61 percent marking highly satisfied.

However, students who stopped attending their course before the survey was conducted were not included in these totals. Although students drop out for a variety of reasons, some students may have stopped attending due to dissatisfaction with the course.

SATISFACTION WITH ASPECTS OF THE COURSE
(IN PERCENTAGES)
CONTINUING EDUCATION SURVEY, FALL 1981

Aspect	Highly Satisfied	Satisfied	Highly Unsatisfied	No Opinion	
Course overall	49%	48%	1%	2%	N = 1205
With location	48%	45%	5%	2%	N = 1197
With cost	49%	44%	2%	4%	N = 1180
With content	30%	60%	1%	8%	N = 1103
Content as advertised	41%	51%	1%	8%	N = 1112
With quality	61%	35%	1%	2%	N = 1179
With time	47%	48%	3%	2%	N = 1166
With registration	39%	52%	5%	5%	N = 1121
With other aspects	25%	33%	13%	29%	N = 158

In What Areas Would Students Like To See Future Offerings?

Students were asked to indicate a first, second, and third choice of subject areas they would like to see included in the College's future non-credit course offerings. The results of the items are detailed below. Please note that the physical education choice may have been higher if the physical education courses were not excluded from the study.

SUGGESTED COURSES FOR FUTURE
CONTINUING EDUCATION SURVEY, FALL 1981

Subject	First Choice		Second Choice		Third Choice	
Health Care	86	(9%)	48	(6%)	34	(5%)
Data Processing	70	(7%)	53	(6%)	37	(5%)
Mechanical	67	(7%)	63	(8%)	33	(5%)
Engineering	66	(7%)	36	(4%)	30	(4%)
Homemaking	60	(6%)	60	(7%)	33	(5%)
Art	55	(6%)	28	(3%)	39	(5%)
Business	54	(6%)	33	(4%)	38	(5%)
Recreation	50	(5%)	53	(6%)	56	(8%)
Clerical	50	(5%)	51	(6%)	31	(4%)
Management	47	(5%)	71	(9%)	39	(5%)
Career Planning	45	(5%)	50	(6%)	85	(12%)
Language	43	(5%)	22	(3%)	24	(3%)
Human Relations	42	(4%)	50	(6%)	50	(7%)
Agriculture	37	(4%)	29	(4%)	24	(3%)
Basic Reading	35	(4%)	21	(3%)	22	(3%)
Law	29	(3%)	34	(4%)	31	(4%)
Other	28	(3%)	9	(1%)	13	(2%)
Physical Ed	26	(3%)	34	(4%)	35	(5%)
Family Life	25	(3%)	33	(4%)	25	(3%)
Ecology	17	(2%)	21	(3%)	16	(2%)
Philosophy	9	(1%)	15	(2%)	13	(2%)
Natural Science	8	(1%)	22	(3%)	25	(3%)

How Were Sub-groups of the Total Population Different?

In what ways do senior adults differ from the general survey population?

Two hundred ten or 16 percent of Harford Community College's continuing education students are 60 years or older (more than 2 times less than the State figure of 34 percent). These 210 students represent approximately 1.5 percent of Harford County's total senior population of 14,208 (from DSP Interim Population Projections, March, 1982).

HCC seniors are mostly female (almost 75 percent), white (almost 90 percent), and widowed (50 percent) or married (40 percent). The education level varies but generally seniors have attained less education than the population as a whole. Forty percent of the senior group earned less than a high school diploma compared to 28 percent for the total population. Fourteen percent of the seniors are employed to some extent with 34 percent homemakers and 43 percent retired.

Seniors typically participate to a much greater extent in the non-credit area (16 percent of total) as compared to credit (1.5 percent of total). Only 3 percent are taking a credit class and a substantial 65 percent are taking one or more additional non-credit courses--approximately twice as many as the total population.

The vast majority of older adult students (90 percent) are taking courses for personal interest with only 4 percent for career reasons and 5 percent for academic concerns. Not surprisingly then, 93 percent responded that their course was not related to their current career.

Older adults to a much greater extent receive tuition assistance than the population as a whole. Eighty-nine percent of seniors receive help from some source (primarily tuition waiver) while 41 percent receive help in the total population.

Older adults also differ from the total as to the method that they became aware of the course. Seniors rely much heavier on neighbors or relatives (53 percent) and less on college publications (29 percent) than the population as a whole (21 percent and 52 percent respectively).

In all areas, seniors rated their non-credit experience extremely high with no more than 2 percent in any category expressing dissatisfaction. Rating the course overall, 55 percent were highly satisfied, 43 percent satisfied, and 1 percent highly dissatisfied.

SENIOR ADULT STUDENTS
(AGES 60-OVER)
SATISFACTION WITH ASPECTS OF THE COURSE
(IN PERCENTAGES)
CONTINUING EDUCATION SURVEY, FALL 1981

Aspect	Highly Satisfied	Satisfied	Highly Unsatisfied	No Opinion	
Course overall	55%	43%	1%		N = 150
With location	56%	42%	2%	1%	N = 159
With cost	73%	24%		3%	N = 149
With content	38%	57%		6%	N = 120
Content as advertised	40%	43%	1%	17%	N = 121
With quality	68%	28%	1%	4%	N = 152
With time	60%	40%	1%		N = 148
With registration	49%	47%		5%	N = 133
With other aspects	55%	46%			N = 22

Courses older adults would like to see in the future are detailed in the table below.

SENIORS
SUGGESTED COURSES FOR FUTURE
CONTINUING EDUCATION SURVEY, FALL 1981

Subject	First Choice		Second Choice		Third Choice	
Health Care	33	(30%)	17	(21%)	1	(2%)
Leisure Rec	20	(18%)	18	(22%)	12	(19%)
Homemak Home Improv	15	(14%)	14	(17%)	5	(8%)
Lang, Lit, For	9	(8%)			2	(3%)
Art Drama	7	(6%)	2	(3%)	9	(14%)
Mech Tech	6	(5%)	2	(3%)	1	(2%)
Phys Ed	5	(5%)	6	(7%)	12	(19%)
Agricul Nat Res	3	(3%)	3	(4%)	7	(11%)
Ecology	2	(2%)			1	(2%)
Bas Skil Read, Math, W	2	(2%)	2	(3%)		
Law	2	(2%)	1	(1%)	2	(3%)
Data Processing	2	(2%)	1	(1%)	2	(3%)
Clerical Secre	2	(2%)			1	(2%)
Bus, Manufac, Comm	1	(1%)	2	(3%)	1	(2%)
Human	1	(1%)	5	(6%)	1	(2%)
Engineering	1	(1%)	2	(3%)	1	(2%)
Phil Rel Theology			2	(3%)	1	(2%)
Nat Sciences			3	(4%)	2	(3%)
Career Planning			1	(1%)		
Other					3	(5%)

What is the relationship of data on female non-traditional aged students (30-50) as compared to the population surveyed?

Sixty-two percent of the total population were females with 299 or 23 percent female and between the ages of 30-50 (often referred to as the returning-woman student). These 299 students represent approximately 1 percent of Harford County's population of 45,506 (from Department of State Planning Population Projections, March, 1982).

HCC continuing women student group is mostly white (91 percent), and married (81 percent) or divorced (12 percent). The education level varies but generally the returning-woman has more education than the population as a whole. Twenty-eight percent of the total has less than a high school education as compared to 19 percent for returning-women.

The returning-woman tends to work full-time to a lesser extent (39 percent versus 50 percent) and to a greater extent part-time (34 percent versus 19 percent) than the total. And, as expected, a greater number are home-makers--34 percent versus 19 percent.

Like the population as a whole, the continuing woman tends to take only one course at a time. Only 24 percent are taking one or more additional non-credit courses and 6 percent an additional credit course.

These women take courses for career reasons more (48 percent versus 40 percent) and personal reasons less (52 percent versus 45 percent) than the total population. Sixty-one percent of the courses taken were directly or somewhat related to the student's career. For these courses, 33 percent reported benefits for obtaining a job with 11 percent reporting benefits in salary increases or promotions and 38 percent claiming help in increasing the skills/knowledge required for a job.

Returning-women to a much greater extent than the total population pay for their tuition themselves or receive help from family (83 percent versus 60 percent). On the other hand, only 16 percent receive governmental or employer support compared to a total figure of 33 percent.

Returning-women also differ as to the method of becoming aware of the course when compared to the total. Returning-women relied more heavily on college publications (76 percent versus 52 percent) and less on neighbors or friends (12 percent versus 21 percent).

Returning-women were as much or more satisfied with the various aspects of the course noted in the survey. For the course overall, 56 percent were highly satisfied, 43 percent satisfied, and 0 percent highly unsatisfied. Less than 3 percent were highly unsatisfied with any particular item.

CONTINUING WOMEN STUDENTS
(AGES 30-50)
SATISFACTION WITH ASPECTS OF THE COURSE
(IN PERCENTAGES)
CONTINUING EDUCATION SURVEY, FALL 1981

Aspect	Highly Satisfied	Satisfied	Highly Unsatisfied	No Opinion	
Course overall	56%	43%	0%	1%	N = 262
With location	47%	49%	3%	1%	N = 261
With cost	43%	54%	2%	2%	N = 260
With content	36%	57%	1%	7%	N = 248
Content as advertised	47%	51%	1%	2%	N = 253
With quality	63%	35%	0%	1%	N = 257
With time	49%	48%	3%	1%	N = 255
With registration	44%	49%	3%	4%	N = 249
With other aspects	10%	48%	5%	38%	N = 21

Courses returning women would like to see in the future are detailed in the table below.

CONTINUING WOMEN STUDENTS
(AGES 30-50)
SUGGESTED COURSES FOR FUTURE
CONTINUING EDUCATION SURVEY, FALL 1981

Subject	First Choice		Second Choice		Third Choice	
Health Care	27	(13%)	11	(6%)	6	(4%)
Data Processing	26	(12%)	14	(8%)	2	(1%)
Career Planning	18	(9%)	11	(6%)	26	(16%)
Clerical Secre	16	(8%)	24	(13%)	16	(10%)
Homemak Home Improv	15	(7%)	15	(8%)	8	(5%)
Art Drama	13	(6%)	7	(4%)	8	(5%)
Human	11	(5%)	9	(5%)	13	(8%)
Leisure Rec	10	(5%)	11	(6%)	15	(9%)
Family Life Par	10	(5%)	15	(8%)	7	(4%)
Lang, Lit, For	9	(4%)	7	(4%)	4	(3%)
Bas Skil Read, Math, W	9	(4%)	6	(3%)	10	(6%)
Other	9	(4%)	3	(2%)	2	(1%)
Manage	8	(4%)	16	(9%)	14	(9%)
Bus, Manufac, Comm	7	(3%)	3	(2%)	5	(3%)
Law	6	(3%)	7	(4%)	4	(3%)
Phys Ed	5	(2%)	5	(3%)	7	(4%)
Agricul Nat Res	4	(2%)	5	(3%)	3	(2%)
Mech Tech	4	(2%)	5	(3%)	2	(1%)
Nat Sciences	2	(1%)	2	(1%)	5	(3%)
Ecology	1	(1%)	3	(2%)	2	(1%)
Phil Rel Theology	1	(1%)	5	(3%)	3	(2%)
Engineering			3	(2%)	1	(1%)

What are some important characteristics of students taking courses related to their careers?

Overall 54 percent of the respondents were taking courses directly (28 percent) or somewhat (23 percent) related to their career. Of these 723 students, just over half were female, 55 percent married, 35 percent single, and 8 percent separated or divorced.

Educational attainment was very similar to the total population with 26 percent less than high school, 49 percent high school, 10 percent certificate or associate's, 9 percent bachelor's and 6 percent higher or other.

However, as expected the employment status of this group compared to the total is different. Career students are employed full-time to a greater extent (61 percent versus 50 percent) to the same extent part-time (9 percent versus 9 percent) to a lesser extent as homemakers (13 percent versus 19 percent) about the same as unemployed (14 percent versus 12 percent) and less to a lesser extent retired (1 percent versus 8 percent).

The career slant of this group is also evidenced in examining the reasons given for taking the course. Sixty-nine percent took the course to prepare for a new career or to improve skills for a current job (about 30 percent higher than the total). Nine percent took the course for academic reasons, and 17 percent for personal reasons (more than 30 less than total).

Respondents saw the course as benefiting them in a similar manner as the total except for the obtaining salary increase item in which 31 percent (29 percent higher than total) saw this as a benefit. Thirty-five percent saw benefits in obtaining a job and 66 percent in increasing skills/knowledge required for the job.

Not surprisingly, almost one-fifth of these students found out about the course from their employer and one-third receive funds to pay for their experiences by government or employer support.

As was true for the total and other subgroups, career students were quite satisfied with the course. Judging the course overall, 46 percent were highly satisfied, 52 percent satisfied, and 1 percent not satisfied. No particular item received a not satisfied percentage of greater than 6 percent.

CAREER ORIENTED STUDENTS
SATISFACTION WITH ASPECTS OF THE COURSE
(IN PERCENTAGES)
CONTINUING EDUCATION SURVEY, FALL 1981

Aspect	Highly Satisfied	Satisfied	Highly Unsatisfied	No Opinion	
Course overall	46%	52%	1%	2%	N = 624
With location	47%	44%	6%	3%	N = 612
With cost	47%	46%	3%	4%	N = 607
With content	29%	61%	2%	9%	N = 586
Content as advertised	37%	56%	2%	6%	N = 587
With quality	58%	39%	1%	2%	N = 609
With time	42%	53%	4%	2%	N = 602
With registration	38%	52%	6%	5%	N = 587
With other aspects	21%	25%	17%	37%	N = 89

Courses career students would like to see in the future are detailed in the table below.

CAREER ORIENTED STUDENTS
SUGGESTED COURSES FOR FUTURE
CONTINUING EDUCATION SURVEY, FALL 1981

Subject	First Choice		Second Choice		Third Choice	
Engineering	52	(10%)	28	(6%)	21	(5%)
Data Processing	43	(9%)	33	(7%)	23	(6%)
Bus, Manufac, Comm	41	(8%)	22	(5%)	26	(6%)
Mech Tech	40	(8%)	41	(9%)	25	(6%)
Manage	37	(7%)	51	(11%)	25	(6%)
Health Care	36	(7%)	15	(3%)	17	(4%)
Clerical Secre	35	(7%)	34	(7%)	21	(5%)
Human	31	(6%)	30	(7%)	32	(8%)
Career Planning	24	(5%)	35	(8%)	59	(15%)
Basic Skil Read, Math,W	23	(5%)	14	(3%)	16	(4%)
Homemak Home Improv	19	(4%)	19	(4%)	16	(4%)
Agricul Nat Res	18	(4%)	14	(3%)	12	(3%)
Lang, Lit, For	18	(4%)	11	(2%)	8	(2%)
Family Life Par	18	(4%)	17	(4%)	14	(4%)
Other	16	(3%)	3	(1%)	6	(2%)
Art Drama	13	(3%)	15	(3%)	17	(4%)
Law	13	(3%)	22	(5%)	17	(4%)
Leisure Rec	9	(2%)	12	(3%)	17	(4%)
Ecology	6	(1%)	9	(2%)	7	(2%)
Phys Ed	6	(1%)	14	(3%)	12	(3%)
Phil Rel Theology	5	(1%)	7	(2%)	6	(2%)
Nat Sciences	2	(0%)	12	(3%)	7	(2%)

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Historically, providing continuing education has been one of the principal roles of Harford Community College. In general, this entails 1) satisfying training and retraining needs in occupational skills; 2) providing learning opportunities for the educationally disadvantaged; 3) providing personal enrichment or leisure courses for the general population.

In recent years continuing education has increased momentum both in terms of enrollment and in the breadth of program offerings. In the Fall of 1981, 5,847 Harford County residents enrolled in 401 courses which generated 273 FTE's for the College.

Appropriately, therefore, in the Fall of 1981, a detailed survey was administered to all continuing education students across the State of Maryland in order to provide information to the professional staff to be used for planning future programs.

In general, the results of the Harford survey confirm Harford Community College's effort to meet its continuing education mission. These results can be summarized in three main conclusions:

1. The Continuing Education Division is serving a wide range of adults in Harford County possessing very different demographic characteristics.
2. Harford County residents are taking continuing education courses to meet their needs in career, academic, and personal areas.
3. Continuing education students are very satisfied with their educational experience at Harford Community College.

An analysis of the results also reveals several major themes that suggest specific areas of concern that could be further developed. These areas are outlined in the following list of recommendations.

Changing Age Patterns

The changing age demographics of Harford County's population will potentially impact the nature of Continuing Education's offerings for the remainder of the 80's. As the average age of the County's citizens increases, careful attention will have to be given to the changing educational needs of existing and prospective students. For example, will occupational training continue in high demand, or as students mature, will they be more interested in leisure time courses? Therefore, it is recommended that an annual analysis of the continuing education student body by age be conducted. This information should be analyzed in conjunction with other information collected from students, in particular, their perceived educational needs.

Student Satisfaction

The results of this survey revealed that the vast majority of continuing education students (97 percent) were "satisfied" or "highly satisfied" with the courses they attended. While it is gratifying to know this, constant vigil must be maintained regarding student satisfaction with the courses and services offered by this division. Therefore, it is recommended that student evaluation forms given to students each semester be used to continually monitor satisfaction levels.

In addition, it should be noted that the Fall Survey, as well as our current student evaluation forms, queried students who have completed most or all of their courses. Students who have dropped a course for reasons of dissatisfaction are less likely to have had an opportunity to express their feelings, unless they have done so voluntarily. Therefore, it is further recommended that the feasibility of developing a survey instrument to measure why students have withdrawn or stopped attending their courses be investigated. If surveying all such students is impractical, a sampling approach should be considered.

Senior Adults

As might be expected the senior citizen population differed significantly from the general survey population in many characteristics, most notably regarding their reasons for enrolling in and their source of information about continuing education courses. It is apparent that the senior citizen population will continue to increase, thus providing a growing pool of potential continuing education students. The importance of this source of students is currently illustrated by a projected FTE generation of 200 for FY 83. Therefore, it is recommended that the senior citizen population be periodically surveyed to determine their education desires. In this regard, close ties should be maintained with other agencies serving senior adults, such as the Commission on Aging.

Female, Non-traditional Aged Students

This segment of the survey population, often referred to as "returning women students," differed from the general population in a number of ways, including reasons for taking courses, sources of tuition, and level of formal education. The growth in this student population is a fairly recent phenomenon, probably fueled by increased career opportunities for women and/or higher divorce rates. The desire for career related courses stands out as a characteristic of this special population.

Although it is uncertain if this population will continue to comprise as large a segment of the student population as it currently does, this group will continue to be a significant segment. Therefore, it is recommended that data be periodically compiled on the female population, aged 30-50, concerning their desire for, and satisfaction with, continuing education courses.

Career Students

With unemployment rates at an all-time high, it is not surprising that a large percentage of students surveyed were taking courses with a career orientation. Non-credit courses with a career orientation are particularly well suited to meet the continuing education needs of the work force. It is not unrealistic to project this area to be the largest growth area for continuing education in general. Therefore, it is recommended that particular attention be given to offering a comprehensive selection of courses that meet the training and re-training needs of the County's population. In this regard, close attention should be paid to changing employment patterns which will dictate changes in course offerings.

MARYLAND PUBLIC COMMUNITY COLLEGES CONTINUING EDUCATION SURVEY

The purpose of this questionnaire is to help your community college and the State Board for Community Colleges assess, improve, and expand noncredit course offerings. All answers are confidential. Please complete and return the questionnaire to your instructor. Thank you.

A. Why are you taking this course? (Check one)

1
- ☐ 1. Prepare for a new career
- ☐ 2. Improve skills for current job
- ☐ 3. Exploration of new subject area
- ☐ 4. Preparation for entry into a degree/certificate program at a college
- ☐ 5. Licensure or certification
- ☐ 6. Develop a leisure time activity
- ☐ 7. Personal interest and self-enrichment
- ☐ 8. Other (Please specify)

_____

B. How satisfied are you with the following characteristics of this course? Write the number which best indicates your level of satisfaction with each characteristic.

1. Highly Satisfied
2. Satisfied
3. Highly Dissatisfied
4. No Opinion

2 ☐ Course overall.
3 ☐ Location
4 ☐ Cost
5 ☐ Difficulty of content
6 ☐ Content as advertised
7 ☐ Quality of instruction
8 ☐ Time the course is offered
9 ☐ Registration process
10 ☐ Other (Please specify)

_____

C. Who is paying for your tuition? (Check one)

11
- ☐ 1. Self
- ☐ 2. Spouse
- ☐ 3. Parent/Guardian
- ☐ 4. Tuition waiver
- ☐ 5. Private Employer pre-payment
- ☐ 6. Private Employer reimbursement
- ☐ 7. Governmental support
- ☐ 8. Other (Please specify)

_____

D. How did you register for this course? (Check one)

12
- ☐ 1. Mail-in
- ☐ 2. In-person
- ☐ 3. Other (Please specify)

_____

E. How do you normally commute to this course location? (Check one)

13
- ☐ 1. Car (Personal)
- ☐ 2. Walk
- ☐ 3. Mass Transit
- ☐ 4. Car Pool
- ☐ 5. Other (Please specify)

_____

F. How does this course relate to your current career or to the career which you plan to enter? (Check one)

14
- ☐ 1. Course directly related to career
- ☐ 2. Course somewhat related to career
- ☐ 3. Course not at all related to career

G. If this noncredit course is "directly" or somewhat "related" to your current or intended career, in what way do you believe this course will assist you? (Check as many as apply)

15 ☐ 1. Obtaining a job?
16 ☐ 2. Obtaining salary increases and/or promotions?
17 ☐ 3. Increasing the skills/knowledge required for your job?
18 ☐ 4. Other (Please specify)

_____

H. How did you become aware of this noncredit course? (Check one)

19
- ☐ 1. Newspaper story
- ☐ 2. Neighbor, friend or relative
- ☐ 3. College publication distributed in my community
- ☐ 4. Television or radio announcement
- ☐ 5. Employer
- ☐ 6. Self-inquiry
- ☐ 7. Other (Please specify)

_____

I. How many other noncredit courses are you currently taking? (Please specify a number)

20 _____

J. How many credit courses are you currently taking? (Please specify a number)

21 _____

K. **What subject areas** would you like to see included in this college's future noncredit course offerings? Select a maximum of three areas. Please write the number of the subject from the list below in the spaces provided:

22-23 First Choice _____
24-25 Second Choice _____
26-27 Third Choice _____

1. Agriculture/Natural Resources
2. Ecology
3. Art/Drama
4. Business, Manufacturing and Commerce
5. Human Relations
6. Engineering
7. Health Care
8. Homemaking/Home Improvement
9. Language, Literature, Foreign Language
10. Basic Skills/Reading, Math, Writing
11. Law/Political Science/Police Science
12. Philosophy/Religion/Theology
13. Physical Education
14. Leisure/Recreation
15. Management/Leadership
16. Mechanical/Technical
17. Natural Sciences
18. Family Life/Parenting
19. Data Processing
20. Clerical/Secretarial
21. Career Planning
22. Other (Please specify)

_____

L. What specific noncredit courses are of interest to you? (Please list possible titles in order of importance)

28 First Choice _____
29 Second Choice _____
30 Third Choice _____

STUDENT INFORMATION

M. What is your sex?

31 ☐ 1. Female
☐ 2. Male

N. What is your present marital status? (Check one)

☐ 1. Single
☐ 2. Married
32 ☐ 3. Separated
☐ 4. Divorced
☐ 5. Widowed
☐ 6. Other

33-37 O. What is the zip code of your home? _____

38-41 P. What is your year of birth? ☐☐☐☐

Q. What is your race? (Check one)

☐ 1. American Indian
☐ 2. Black
42 ☐ 3. Asian
☐ 4. White
☐ 5. Hispanic

R. What is your current employment status? (Check one)

☐ 1. Homemaker
☐ 2. Self-employed
☐ 3. Employed full-time
☐ 4. Employed part-time
43 ☐ 5. Unemployed and seeking a job
☐ 6. Unemployed and not seeking a job
☐ 7. Retired and seeking a job
☐ 8. Retired and not seeking a job
☐ 9. Other (Please specify)

_____

S. What is your highest level of education achieved to this date? (Check one)

☐ 1. Less than high school diploma or GED Certificate
44 ☐ 2. High school diploma or GED Certificate
☐ 3. Certificate
☐ 4. AA/AS degree
☐ 5. BA/BS degree
☐ 6. MA/MS degree
☐ 7. Doctorate
☐ 8. Other (Please specify)

_____

T. Please indicate your approximate annual income before taxes. (Check one)

☐ 1. 0—$4,999
45 ☐ 2. $5,000—$9,999
☐ 3. $10,000—$19,999
☐ 4. $20,000—$29,999
☐ 5. $30,000—$39,999
☐ 6. Over $40,000

U. What are the best days and times for you to attend a noncredit course?

	Day	Time
First Choice	_____	_____
Second Choice	_____	_____
Third Choice	_____	_____

THANK YOU

COLLEGE USE ONLY

46-47 College Code ☐☐ | 48-53 Course Number ☐☐☐☐☐☐ | 54 % Course ☐

08/21/80—40296

APPENDIX B

COMPARATIVE TABLES

CONTINUING EDUCATION SURVEY, FALL 1981

GENERAL SOURCES OF TUITION PAYMENT
CONTINUING EDUCATION SURVEY, FALL 1981

Source	Total	Seniors Ages 60-Over	Returning Women Ages 30-50	Career Students
Family or Self	60%	11%	83%	62%
Governmental or Employer Support	33%	77%	16%	34%
Other	8%	12%	1%	5%
N	1398	189	294	706

METHOD THAT STUDENT BECAME AWARE OF COURSE
CONTINUING EDUCATION SURVEY, FALL 1981

Method	Total	Seniors Ages 60-Over	Returning Women Ages 30-50	Career Students
College publications	52%	29%	76%	53%
Neighbor, friend or relative	21%	53%	12%	14%
Self-inquiry	10%	4%	7%	10%
Employer	9%	1%	2%	18%
Other	5%	12%	2%	3%
Newspaper	3%	1%	2%	3%
TV-Radio	0%	0%	0%	0%
N	1377	193	290	693

SEX
CONTINUING EDUCATION SURVEY, FALL 1981

Sex	Total	Seniors Ages 60-Over	Returning Women Ages 30-50	Career Students
Female	62%	77%	100%	55%
Male	38%	23%	0%	45%
N	1395	200	299	698

RACE
CONTINUING EDUCATION SURVEY, FALL 1981

Race	Total	Seniors Ages 60-Over	Returning Women Ages 30-50	Career Students
Black	7%	12%	4%	6%
White	90%	88%	92%	91%
Other	3%	1%	4%	3%
N	1372	192	290	723

MARITAL STATUS
CONTINUING EDUCATION SURVEY, FALL 1981

Marital Status	Total	Seniors Ages 60-Over	Returning Women Ages 30-50	Career Students
Married	54%	39%	81%	55%
Single	26%	6%	4%	35%
Separated or Divorced	8%	4%	13%	8%
Widowed	10%	51%	3%	1%
Other	1%	0%	0%	1%
N	1404	198	298	701

CURRENT EMPLOYMENT SCALE COLLAPSED
CONTINUING EDUCATION SURVEY, FALL 1981

Employment Scale	Total	Seniors Ages 60-Over	Returning Women Ages 30-50	Career Students
Employed Full-Time	50%	11%	39%	61%
Employed Part-Time	9%	3%	16%	9%
Homemaker	19%	34%	34%	13%
Unemployed	12%	1%	10%	14%
Retired	8%	43%	1%	1%
Other	3%	9%	1%	3%
N	1364	194	282	698

HIGHEST EDUCATION LEVEL
CONTINUING EDUCATION SURVEY, FALL 1981

Education Level	Total	Seniors Ages 60-Over	Returning Women Ages 30-50	Career Students
Less than high school	28%	40%	19%	26%
High school diploma	45%	41%	46%	49%
Certificate	3%	4%	4%	4%
AA - AS	6%	2%	9%	7%
BA - BS	11%	6%	12%	9%
MA - MS	4%	5%	5%	2%
PhD	0%	0%	0%	0%
Other	4%	3%	6%	4%
N	1356	191	288	682

NUMBER TAKING OTHER NON-CREDIT COURSES
CONTINUING EDUCATION SURVEY, FALL 1981

Number of Non-Credit Courses	Total	Seniors Ages 60-Over	Returning Women Ages 30-50	Career Students
0	67%	35%	76%	73%
1 or more	33%	65%	24%	27%
N	1456	210	299	723

NUMBER TAKING CREDIT COURSES
CONTINUING EDUCATION SURVEY, FALL 1981

Number of Credit Courses	Total	Seniors Ages 60-Over	Returning Women Ages 30-50	Career Students
0	93%	97%	94%	92%
1 or more	7%	3%	6%	8%
N	1456	210	299	723

GENERAL REASONS FOR TAKING THE COURSE
CONTINUING EDUCATION SURVEY, FALL 1981

Reasons	Total	Seniors Ages 60-Over	Returning Women Ages 30-50	Career Students
Career	41%	4%	47%	69%
Academic	8%	5%	7%	9%
Personal	47%	90%	42%	17%
Other	5%	1%	6%	5%
N	1311	192	265	710

RELATIONSHIP OF COURSE TO CAREER
CONTINUING EDUCATION SURVEY, FALL 1981

Relation-ship	Total	Seniors Ages 60-Over	Returning Women Ages 30-50	Career Students
Directly	30%	4%	35%	55%
Somewhat	24%	3%	26%	46%
Not at all	46%	93%	40%	0%
N	1456	149	286	710

BENEFITS OF COURSE
(FOR COURSES DIRECTLY OR SOMEWHAT RELATED TO CAREER)
CONTINUING EDUCATION SURVEY, FALL 1981

Benefit	Total	Seniors Ages 60-Over	Returning Women Ages 30-50	Career Students
Obtaining a job	45%		50%	35%
Obtaining salary increases or promotions	3%		11%	31%
Increase the skills/ knowledge required for job	71%		38%	66%
Other	18%		8%	6%

ERIC Clearinghouse for Jr. Colleges
8118 Math Sciences
University of California
Los Angeles, CA 90024

March 4, 1983